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The Abbot Courant

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Au Courant

The following is something I received in the deepest nadir of frustration a few months ago. It revived me immediately. I would like to dedicate it to my class, the class of 1968, for I feel that our class epitomizes many of the characteristics described in the piece, and, if it does not, it should, and (hopefully and optimistically) will. Life is not a term paper; it should never be outlined. I ask that everyone read the following, for I can add no more.

the sacred bull spouting forth wrath and indignation at things like boots and gad and forgetting that chapel was this morning has no idea that it is these things that hang over our mournfully pitiful heads bowed in wretched prayer while all the leaves on the trees turn into golden caterpillars and the song of small birds is drowned in the voice of the organ bellowing forth on meaningful truisms of bubble gum and orange peels and spring somehow is still there and leaping up on tiptoe to peek inside the windows so it can get a look at us and so we can spot it bobbing up into the pane of view to our immediate right saying somehow that it is here and all we need do is look outside for just one instant to see that god is in his heaven and all is right with the world no matter what the poets of sonnets or writers of short stories or bellowing indignants have to say about it being prohibited this month or next to go outside if you can and run and jump and play like we used to do and just plain have fun letting ourselves go in the fecund earthy primal existence that is ours beneath this rough exterior and the beat-

ing heart of gold deeper even than that burrowing beneath the very roots of our existence to the soul of all men that arises in that mudluscious as e e cummings would say time when all the world is puddlewonderful and we can see ourselves stripping away the grey raiment that has cloaked our emotions all winter and we can really cut loose as it were and take off that heavy shawl and let our souls run naked across the green spongy lawn without a keep off sign to the souls of the others of us who have stripped down to the buff nudity of freedom and jump into each others pale and warming arms to cling and tell each other that we have missed them all winter and now we can run loose down the last stretch to the gleaming white tower and paling blue that signifies the end and yet another beginning for us and the world which has just come out of its shell and is all ours to have and to hold as we see fit for all its wonderful exuberant sensual lusty down to earthiness which we now hold in our naked palms slightly sweating in thinking about the enormity of it all and a little scared because this is the biggest step yet bigger even than between fifteen and sixteen but we wouldnt drop it for anything because this is something precious and dear and we will not give it up because this is our life and our soul and more than anything else it is our very own world.



If only,

time, and again, I have said

let me speak of love

and others stare, for what do they, in this make world,
know of a heart born too late?

Not even you,

who tries to understand and often brings a smile to my lips
but moreso a tear,

can comprehend,

but the comfort of the human soul, which you do, so very gently,
and is even practiced by the pagan,
soothes me.

But this is not enough. Why must air be contaminated by my wants?

What reasons a vacuum?

Would I die in your element or
death to you because of my presence, such as the suitor to Rapaccini's
daughter? I love, and it cannot be taught, but, so futilely I try without
force, but my tasks are like the beginning of Jason's accomplishments,
and I

find no favor with the gods, or too much

or why, why would I be placed here?

You look so intently into my face,

trying to study and fulfill my wants.

today that is impossible,

yet there is a wistfulness.

do you too dream of knights of old,
and chivalry, of days long gone, the bison and the men,

ahhh! your eyes do sparkle

and you do a little and

a lot,

go ahead, kiss me,

and I'll smile to make you happy,

I don't know whether it
would come naturally,

but I'll be ready for dancing in a minute,

with my new golden shoes

and a century heart.

Cher Lewis

Soft Night

Soft night who hides her face behind a veil of dark,
And winks so sweetly with a million flirting eyes
As if to cloak some ancient sorrow stark,
And smother to all ears her mournful sighs.

A fearful soul awaits her doomed attack,
And crouches to await her fated call,
But as she comes he ceases to fight back—
Discovering in her silence, resting all.

Her velvet black so radiant and clinging,
And yet again so far away and chill
In which at times he hears her softly singing,
Confiding sorrows to some lonely hill.

While she guards her secret of a grief so deep,
Her soft caresses kiss the drowsy farms,
And gently lull the vagabonds to sleep
As she holds her treasured captives in her arms.

Nancy Belcher





The Telegram

Setting;

An old musty living room equipped with a sofa and coffee table. On the coffee table is a silver tea service. There is a large grandfather clock from which a macabre looking gentleman emerges to announce the time. There is a large comfortable chair next to a table which is covered with all types of jars. These jars are each filled with a butterfly fluttering around inside. On the other side of the chair is a pile of old newspapers and letters, very neatly stacked. In the midst of this confusion there is total darkness due to the fact that the windows are all tightly shuttered and locked on the inside. Mrs. Charlotte Glarson is the Woman sitting in the chair. She is a woman in her forties. She looks old for her age, yet she is very youthfully dressed. She directs the majority of her conversation in the opening of the scene to the jars of butterflies beside her.

Mrs. Glarson;

Good morning my sweets! How are mama's little babies today? Oh you must be very hungry. Charles told me to take care of you while he was away and he'll be so happy to see how healthy his babies are when he comes home. Charlotte darling, are you feeling better today? (she looks over at one of the jars containing her butterflies.) Here children, have some breakfast. (she fumbles for a box from which she takes a few dead flies and carefully she drops the flies into the jars. As she is doing this a man steps out of the grandfather clock and announces the time.)

The Clock;

The time is never changing.

Mrs. Glarson;

Oh, it's time for the mail. (she reaches for the stack of letters and papers resting on the floor beside her and carefully picks out one of the letters.) Children, would you like to hear what Daddy says? Of course you would! (she glances over the letter.) Let me see — May 4, 1974, (Pause) It's been a hard year,

hasn't it babies. Well, Daddy says he's coming home soon and he's brought us all gifts from the Phillipines. My word! His friend was injured in action yesterday, isn't that a shame! I hope Charles didn't get hurt. But He's so strong and skillful that I'm sure he can shoot those silly old guns. He says my package didn't get to him. Well, I'll just have to send some more canned goods today. He always has loved my peaches so much. Babies, when he comes home we're going to have a large roast pork dinner. Charles loves pork and I'll have to make some blueberry pie. That's his favorite. (pause) John dear, (she reaches for one of the butterfly jars) did I ever tell you about the first time I made Daddy a blueberry pie? It was a beautiful June day. We went out to the country and found these fields filled with wild blueberries. I remember it so well. It was about two weeks after I had met him. Mother didn't like him at all so I had to sneak out of the house. He had this hunting cabin and we spent the day there. It was then he told me how much he liked blueberry pie. We left the cabin and found all those wild berries. My skirt and hands were just covered with blueberry stains. Charles told me how lovely and natural I looked sitting there among the grey-blue berries with the sun floating down around me. (pause) He always told me he loved me because I was so natural and uninhibited. (there is a momentary silence; then Mrs. Glarson jubilantly bursts out) Oh darlings, we had such lovely days! Everything was so green, yellow, and pink; sun, grass and flowers, all the time. Nothing was ever wrong. (pause) People always spoke of what a lovely couple we were. They'll be saying it again someday soon. Just wait till everyone gets a chance to look at the **Whole** Glarson family. But my precious ones, it's time for your walk in the lovely warm sun. Would you like that? (quickly she gathers all the jars and places them in a wicker baby carriage. She then places a blanket over them and goes to the sofa where she picks up an out-dated hat) Just a minute my pets, mama is getting ready. We musn't leave the house without our hat, must we?

(she examines the hat which she begins to place on her head. Charles loved this hat. He said it made my cheeks look like ripened strawberries. How he'd flatter me and how I laughed! ! (pause) Oh but my poor children! You must think you mama's awfully silly. No? Well then let's go for our walk

Charles Jr. (she directs her conversation to a specific butterfly jar) you've been awfully nervous and jumpy lately. Well, we're going outside now, then you'll feel better. (quickly she turns on a light) My word, what a lovely day it is today! I must take care my poor face doesn't freckle in the sun. I don't think Charles likes freckles. He used to tell me about Suzanne Patterson, one of his old flames. "Charlotte," he'd say, "You have such creamy white skin, you make that Suzanne Patterson look like a spotted cow," (pause) Of course I'd laugh and tell him to stop since Suzanne was one of my best friends. He was always comparing us and I was always better than she. (pause) My, though, my poor babies must be terribly bored with mama's ramblings. Come, let's go! (She scurries around the room, pushing the carriage in circles around her small living room singing "Ride a Cock Horse to Bambury Cross." Suddenly she stops.) Oh children, you are getting your poor mother exhausted. Perhaps we should rest for a bit. (She seats herself on the sofa where she picks up a newspaper and begins to scan it)

Well, you rest, and I'll read. (pause) Oh my goodness! It says here that the war is turning in the Pacific. (without continuing her reading she goes on) That means that Daddy should be coming home any day. We had better get back to the house and get ready for him! (She turns off the artificial sun and rushes back to her armchair. She puts the jars back in their positions on the table. She rests in silence for a moment then suddenly she perks up) Do you know what I should like? I should like to make a new dress in honor of your father's arrival. (she walks to a closet where she finds a dress, seemingly brand new, yet out of date. She also removes a small sewing box from the closet. She returns to her chair and begins to work on the dress using a needle without any thread since the dress is already completed) Mr. Pease at the department store said I was being too extravagant when I bought this. However, I told him that Charles was coming home and nothing is too good

for my darling. It is a lovely dress though. It's too bad that the neckline is so difficult to do. If Charles doesn't like this I'll be heartbroken. On the other hand, he doesn't generally insult or reprimand me—he never had to. (Pause) I remember the night that we went to the Womens Auxiliary dance. I had a long green dress on and a green satin ribbon in my hair. We were dancing back and forth like this. (she gets up and sways back and forth clutching the dress) Suddenly one of the most beautiful songs floated through the room. (she scurries to a phonograph player where she puts on a very old and appropriate record) We danced till I thought I'd drop. (still dancing)

"Lottie" he said, "I think I love you." "Oh, Charles Glarson, don't be absurd! I barely know you. Besides, I don't think you even know what love is. (giggling and trying to make a poor attempt at being cute) Oh, Charles, I've hurt you, haven't I. Forgive me. It's just that you throw me totally off guard when you say things like that. Silly, you know how much I care for you. Charles, Charles, don't be angry please?" (the music stops and Charlotte stops dancing) Oh what a night that was—that's when Charles finally realized that we were meant for each other. Of course I had known it all along but I had to wait for the right moment (brings dress back to closet) because it had to be perfect. Charles was such a perfectionist and he just couldn't spoil things now. Well I'll hide this dress back in the closet. I hope Charles warns me when he's coming so I can be ready. (she returns to her seat. The record player is still going and the hum of the player along with the repetitious sound produced by the scratch on the record fills the room with noise.) My word! It must be awfully warm outside. I can hear the crickets chirping. (pause) Aren't crickets silly animals, babies? All they do is jump around back and forth, back and forth. They are ugly little brown things. They're not pretty like my babies. Charles never liked crickets. I hate crickets. In fact, I detest them! Why don't they just be quiet and go away? (she begins to run around the room in search of the supposed crickets) Children you'd better hide; they're coming. I can tell, they're jumping all around. Why don't they just go and leave us alone? I never liked crickets. Charles never liked crickets. They're silly, stupid, and ugly. They never know what they're doing. (pause during

which one can hear the scratched record repeating its noise) Shut up you silly animals! ! (In her frenzy she hits the record player and notices that the record has not been removed. She takes the record off and is about to renew her search for the crickets. Suddenly she realizes that the noise is gone.) Thank God they've left. (pause) My poor ba-babies are you all right? Oh Charles, you're all nervous and jumpy again. Did all that awful noise excite you? Mother must realize not to lose her temper in front of her precious sweethearts. That's one thing Charles always tells me—I'm too emotional. I'm not really, it's just that there are certain things that irritate me much more than others. Do you understand my darlings? Mother is v e r y sorry for losing her temper in front of you. You know I would't hurt you, don't you? Why don't you all rest. (she covers them with a blanket. In the space of a long pause the room becomes completely dark while some fumbling is heard. Suddenly a match is struck in the darkness and a cigarette is lit. This is the only light seen on stage.) Charles had better not come home now. If he ever saw me smoking he'd have my head. He thinks that smoking is a dirty habit. I remember how I used to hide in the storage rooms to have a cigarette. After that I'd have to air out the room and the house would get so cold. I couldn't have ever let him know, though, I think he would have been so hurt that he would make me feel like dying. (pause) Charles has this way about him. When he's disappointed his eyes get all glistening. He looks like he's crying but there's always a twinkle in his eye that completely erases the possibility of tears.

Besides, Charles is too strong to cry. Soldiers don't cry, they can't. All they have to do is fight and hold on. It's the women that cry. (pause) Funny, I never cry. It must be because I have my babies to keep me company. (she walks over to a small lamp and turns it on.) Charles always said tears were a sign of weakness and inferiority. Crying is indicative of sumbission and defeat. The Glarsons are never defeated. I must remember that....

It's because of this I know that Charles will be back shortly. He can't be defeated. I can't be defeated. Neither can my babies be defeated. (she goes to wake up her butterfly children) Children, wake up, more mail. Father wrote us all a letter, isn't that wonderful? He says that he hasn't been feeling too well but he thinks he's just tired. You know darlings, Daddy is a big man

now and he's fighting all those horrible Asians so that everyone will be happy. It's very hard fighting a war. Only good men can do it. Daddy says — he might just be tired. (pause) My, won't he be surprised to see all of you. Good Heavens! He also says that his batallion has been under steady attack. That is terrible! But he won't get hurt, I know. The good people never get hurt in wars, only the bad. (pause where she continues to read) He's still asking about his poor gardenia plant. The dear thing died quite a while ago. I really should tell him but it would hurt him so. That gardenia plant was almost a part of him. He paid such careful attention to it. I think he often forgot that it was only a plant. Yet, I must admit, gardenias are awfully pretty. They're really quite hardy and yet they're so beautiful and delicate. Charles used to always bring mama gardenias.

She'd take them and float them in a bowlful of water. She said they reminded her of lakes and water lilies and golden days with fluffy clouds. Yes, it is a shame the poor gardenia plant died, but I'm no gardener. (pause) Charles will be mad. (she closes the letter and puts it with her others) (pause) You know sweeties, it's going to be strange seeing Daddy again. I doubt if he has changed, but if he has we must go on as normally as before. (she looks around,) Everything seems to be in order.

That clock, however, is a most unfortunate piece of merchandise. It's always at least an hour behind itself. It's most annoying. (Pause) Perhaps I should rehang Daddy's picture. It really is a nice picture, but ever since I had the new frame put on it, I haven't had a chance to hang it. (long pause) I don't think you children realize the difficulties of facing the petty tasks of life without a stronger force backing you up. Charles always backs me up. Funny, he's not here to help me and I think we're getting along all right, don't you babies? (pause) My word! I was just thinking to myself that Mrs. Glarson, your grandmother, said she was coming to tea today. I practically forgot all about it.

Charles' mother is very efficient and prompt. I'd better be already for her or she'll think I'm an incapable wife. Perhaps I'll let her read Charles' latest letter. They cheer her up so. Also I think I'll put out the newspaper for her to glance at. (reading the headline of one of the papers) "Asian victory takes U.S. lives." Isn't that horrible, children! I'm sure Daddy is all right though. Besides, he can take care of himself. (pause, then talks

to butterflies) Grandmother is going to be so proud of all of you. You must be good and realize we're the only children she has left. It's too bad her husband died. It's so lonely for her now, being a widow and all. I think the only time she ever even leaves the house is to come and visit us. Charles says when he gets back she must spend more time with us.

Clock:

The time is never changing.

Mrs. Glarson:

Oh is that the doorbell? She must be here. (she walks to a dark corner of the room. Typical greeting conversation is heard and she reappears alone.) Here mother, let me take your hat and coat. Hasn't the weather been absolutely awful. All this sun is drying my flower beds and I never have enough time to water them. I received another letter from Charles. It's really quite nice. Would you like to see it? Apparently they are having problems with the heat and tropical diseases. He says not to worry, though, because he's been innoculatd against everything. (pause) Yes, he does write sweet letters doesn't he. He's always so thoughtful and careful about what he says. He never wants to worry any of us. (pause) Oh, but you must be terribly thirsty. Here, let me offer you some tea. You take lemon, right? There. (pause) Do you know that I heard Mrs. Paxson got a telegram from the War Department a few days ago! Nobody knows exactly what it said. You know how she has lived in solitude ever since her husband went off to fight. Apparently when she read it she fainted on the spot! I'm sure it must have said someting positively dreadful. I suppose he's dead, but that's the way of life. Some live and some die. Charles is coming back, we know that. (pause) I've completely forgotten, you haven't seen the children. They've been waiting all week to see you, haven't you my precious ones? They are all behaving quite well except for Charles Jr. He's been rather nervous and jumpy lately. I was going to call the doctor but then I decided it was just nervous excitement. He's happy that his father will be home soon. You must admit He and Charles Sr. do bear quite a resemblance to one another. (pause) Oh but mother, you don't have to go so soon do you? Well dear, you must come back next week. Have you heard from Charles recently? Well, when you do, bring the letters over with you. Goodbye mother! Say goodbye to grannie children. Take care! (pause)

Oh my babies, it's been such a long wait. Remember grammie and all those silly lawyers and that telegram? (pause) Telegram? They told me that Grandmother was dead but we knew she wasn't, didn't we. She isn't dead. Nobody dies nowadays with all those new medicines and inventions. People don't die. She wasn't dead today when she came to see us. All those stupid people with all those papers to sign and that telegram. Charles sent it to me as a joke. They said he wasn't coming back—Papers, signatures, stupid people!

My goodness, little Charles, you are jumpy. All you do is keep flitting around in that jar. I wish you'd sit still. That's why he had to fight, but you're not going to leave me, are you baby? No, you'd never be so stupid and go off with all those silly Asians. Charles always told me that he liked to read books about Asians. They were so intricate, exciting and natural he said. —Letter—He always writes me about all the people he meets. (pause) We were going to Tahiti together but Charles said he couldn't afford it. He'd stay at the office late every night and work himself silly! —We couldn't go; the war came. —Charles left—He's coming back though, maybe even today, perhaps even tomorrow.—He said he'd come back to me, but, (pause) Telegram—Lawyers—It will take a while.—Before we were married he said we'd never be separated.—He left—My poor little babies, you are so lonesome. All children need their fathers. Mommies are only fifty percent of the family. Daddies are the other half. We all need people, don't we babies? But you've got me now. I'll take care of you. We'll get along all right till Daddy comes. (Looks behind her at the shuttered windows) That window's cracked. I really must fix it, but I'm too lazy. Charles will do it when he gets home; then the house will be all fixed up.—Saturday—That was the day the funny letter came. (she unlocks a draw and takes out a telegram) See baby, isn't this a silly little letter? Charles never typed his letters on yellow stationery. Where, in the middle of a war, would he get a typewriter or funny yellow paper?—See this funny letter—(she locks it back in the draw.)

Do you want some more food, my precious ones? (she feeds her butterfly children again) Charlie, I swear you are just not eating enough. I really must get a doctor to come and take a look at you. You are looking most peeked through the cheeks. You also have those funny little spots all over you. My God, you must have contracted some rare disease! My poor, Charles! (she cuddles the jar in her arms) Oh we must take care of you! Maybe you need some air. (carefully she opens the jar and takes the butterfly out by the wings.) You must be so tired and hungry. You haven't touched your last few meals. You haven't slept for days either. (she is about to replace the butterfly back in the jar when it gets away from her) Charlie, Charlie, my dear where are you going?—(the butterfly exits from the crack in the window into the world) Charles—Come back baby!—Don't leave me—Did my telegram scare you, silly? I should have fixed that crack.—Charles, Charles are you gone?—You were always so flighty and nervous. You told me you'd never leave me—You told me you'd come back. (she screams and with one blow of her arm knocks all the butterflies shattering to the floor. Sobbing, she begins to slowly pull herself together. She picks up the letters and newspapers and throws them into the fireplace. She lights a cigarette then tosses the match into the fireplace. Quickly her keepsakes rise in flames. She takes her hat, puts it on, and places herself on the sofa) My poor baby, you're just so lost, aren't you sweetheart.

Curtain

Karen Urie

Elegy In A South Vietnamese Village

What sickness gnaws the flesh of mankind's core?
Infects its host with something false within?
Oh heavenly Muse, for your aid I implore.
How can you justify the ways of men?
Smoke veils the angry flames that singe the sky
Till darkness' merciful cloak is complete.
Far off a gunshot sounds its deadly cry;
A dirge for a child slaughtered in the street.
When a child is killed who never knew hate's way
The price of war and power is too high.
With innocent joy she went outside to play.
A hostile act? She went outside to die.
The charred terrain mourns its and that child's waste.
Yet n'er man's sickness did the girl's pure mind infest.
God's virtue kept her virgin soul chaste.
Console yourself in this; the child was blessed.

Nancy Steele





“It’s a good thing none of us has any emotions,”
she said.

The body exists,
 sleepwalking.
makes physical contacts
And feels
 Satisfied.

Then what is pain?
They say it is dangerous to wake a sleepwalker.

Jane Heifitz



How The Tortoise Got His Shell

Hear me, yes listen,
O My Best Beloved,
While the marvels of nature
Are all uncovered
And the spectrum of color
Disperses from whence it hovered.

And what of the tortoise,
The previous held tortoise
In own leather, landed,
Yet now sea-shelled, stranded.

It happened on the branch
Of the branched branch-Ubangi
Where waters ochre and subtle
Buoyed said tortoise in the muddle.

Not in muddle should he be
But in puddle on the lee
Smoking of his cigars three
That stolen from the Ethiope see.

Best Beloved, now the workers,
All the animals of the land,
Frustrated with their burdens
Search for help, then unmanned.

They travel high, they travel low,
(Vagrance then was slow)
And upward to the hilltop,
To the royal mighty hilltop.

The workers find their leader
And such story they bestow:
“He is sunning in the drink,
He is mooning on the shore”,

Said the zebra whose task remains
Finding food upon the plains
Even when it rains.
(Which manifest he ought abhor.)

The lemur asks him, "What you doing?"
He replies, "Simply renewing
My rights as a left citizen,"
And with ultra-loco criticism
Plus featured fishy sarcasm
"I'm feasting on your reproductive brewing."

"Better yet", replied the tiger
With those stripes nearly inside her,
"He o'ertakes his leisure-full
By leaning 'pon th' knowledge arbol."

At this the leader-Wing
Did such celestial thing
And upward he did fling
Cloud-ether in a ring.

"Such an amazing thing,"
Quoth the animals, "in the Spring".
Meanwhile, the tortoise woke
And with scarcely one stroke

(For he claimed freedom-boredom
And thought not on post-mortem)
He got him to the coast
And discovered the wrathful-most.

He felt such weighted pressure,
Best Beloved, now attend,
That he could not raise himself up
Never start to comprehend

For it happed on him while bathing,
Flesh and water meeting, waving,
That Cloud-ether chance descended—
On branch-Ubangi, condescended.

Now when ether as the spirit
Meets the water, then unites
For its third, yes, tri-fold merit,
Soft things harden, harden quite.

With the slime and sin from tortoise,
Too uneventful to stay clean,
The ether - water next completed
Something strong, encasing, green.

Of course the animals had assembled
According to ethnics on the bank.
"Look, see tortoise", they near trembled,
"He has unsocially sank."

Tortoise stayed under aquamatter
Unbestially long
But when he surfaced, that explained the chatter
Of animals- unreasonably wrong.

They could have stared at him forever
And eternally been confused.
But Medusa-hair presented himself
And thoughtfully he Mused:

"This shell from our Natue parent
Is born by those who work refused."
At this explanation the animals nodded.
It fit well their comprehension.

Now, the tortoise, he was pond'ring
A sure way to planned redemption.
Then he found with little effort
His head he had withdrawn.

With this as mean of escaping
He sensed frustration come and gone.
Ah, the law, the law of the jungle,
Be it fit him that will survive,
That he be fraternally unembarrassed
Within own home to be reprimaled.

Karen Seaward

Stone Idol

He seems to belong elsewhere
Sun should scorch
 his brittle stone back
and heat the gray contours of his face.
 Now he scowls.
Perhaps before
 it was an expression of supremacy
And pride.
 Would you not be proud
 to be worshipped by man?

Margaret Cheney





Shuffle in the sanctuary
Ahhhh the at home type
 no gripe
“he’s got’cha in a warm n’tender
 love.”
 let’s get happy
and stomp a little
 a bump (?)
in the road take the middle
he’s just so big
 get a gig
 and shuffle on.
oh, lord, shuffle on.

Kathflem Nielsen

Cher Lewis

Learning

You have listened
and not heard.
You have looked
and not seen.
Therefore speak
and say nothing.

You could be you,
but remember the “A’s”!
So if perchance you hear
or see,
Please ignore.

Jane Heifitz

N.G.A.F.

His angry, hungry eyes now close
His fingers clutching emptiness
And dying in the street he lay—
“Oh gross” she said
And turned away

Dennie Malone

Perched among branches
I, a bloated glutton, still eating
This world must never end.

Ptarmigan Teal

Bulging eyes glance through dirt
As tails move following
Garbage to the sea.

Jenny Martin

A dew glistening down
Its silence interrupted by
The scarlet fire of sun.

Sally Browning

Leaves rustle anxiously
Around the lake; one, alone
Floats in the shining calm at its center.

Sally Browning



I am a stranger in this world, and there is no one in the Universe who understands the language I speak. Patterns of bizarre remembrance form suddenly in my mind, and my eyes bring forth queer images and sad ghosts. I walk in the deserted prairies, watching the streamlets running fast, up and up from the depths of the valley to the top of the mountain; I watch the naked trees blooming and bearing fruit, and shedding their leaves in one instant, and then I see the branches fall and turn into speckled snakes. I see the birds hovering above, singing and wailing; then they stop and open their wings and turn into undraped maidens with long hair, looking at me from behind kohled and infatuated eyes, and smiling at me with full lips soaked with honey, stretching their scented hands toward me. Then they ascend and disappear from my sight like phantoms, leaving in the firmament the resounding echo of their taunts and mocking laughter.

from *Secrets of the Heart*—by Kahlil Gibran

from, Contemplations in Sadness

Beauty belongs to youth, but the youth for whom this earth was made is naught but a dream whose sweetness is enslaved to a blindness that renders its awareness too late. Will ever the day come when the wise will band together the sweet dreams of youth and the joy of knowledge? Each is but naught when in solitary existence. Will ever the day come when Nature will be the teacher of Man and Humanity his book of devotions, and Life his daily school?

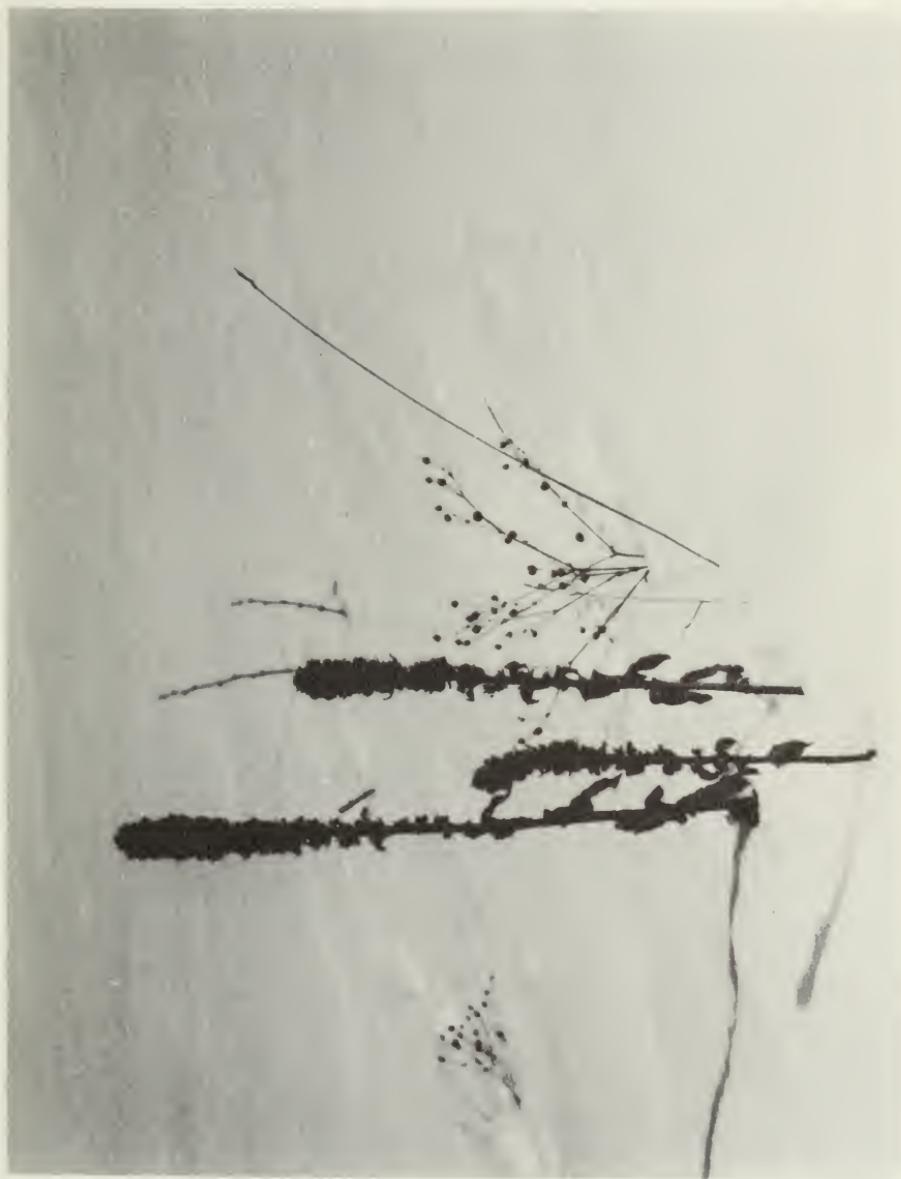
Youth's purpose of joy—capable in its ecstasy and mild in its responsibility—cannot seek fulfillment until knowledge heralds the dawn of that day.

Many are the men who curse with venom the dead days of their youth; many are the women who execrate their wasted years with the fury of the lioness who has lost her cubs; and many are the youths and maidens who are using their hearts only to sheathe the daggers of the bitter memories of the future, wounding themselves through ignorance with the sharp and poisoned arrows of seclusion from happiness.

Old age is the snow of the earth; it must through light and truth, give warmth to the seeds of youth below, protecting them and fulfilling their purpose until Nisan comes and completes the growing pure life of youth with new awakening.

We are walking too slowly toward the awakening of our spiritual elevation, and only that plane, as endless as the firmament, is the understanding of the beauty of existence through our affection and love for that beauty.

from Secrets of the Heart—by Kahlil Gibran





For even as love crowns you so shall he crucify you. Even as he is for your growth so is he for your pruning

Even as he ascends to your height and caresses your tenderest branches that quiver in the sun.

So shall he descend to your roots and shake them in their clinging to the earth.

Like sheaves of corn he gathers you unto himself.

He threshes you to make you naked.

He sifts you to free you from your husks.

He grinds you to whiteness.

He kneads you until you are pliant;

And then he assigns you to his sacred fire, that you may become sacred bread for God's sacred feast.

from **The Prophet**

by Kahlil Gibran

Under the Sun

O spirit of Solomon that hovers in the ethereal realm; you, who cast aside the tattered garment of matter, have left behind you these words, born of weakness and misery, which deject those still imprisoned in bodies.

You know there is a meaning in this life which Death does not conceal. But how could humanity attain a knowledge which comes only when the soul is freed from earthly ties?

You realize now that life is not a vexation of spirit; that things done under the sun are not all vanity; that somehow everything has ever marched and shall ever march toward Truth. We miserable creatures have adhered to your earthly sayings as words of great wisdom. But they are shutters that darken the mind and obliterate hope.

You now understand that ignorance, evil and despotism have their causes; and that beauty is the revelation of wisdom, the product of virtue and the fruit of justice.

You can see now that the spirit advances toward the light in spite of worldly hardships. Yet we repeat your words which teach that a man is but a toy in the hands of the unknown.

You have regretted your planting in our hearts a faintness toward life in the world and apprehension toward life in the hereafter. Yet we persist in heeding your earthly words.

O spirit of Solomon who now dwells in Eternity, reveal yourself to the lovers of wisdom and teach them not to walk the path of heresy and misery. Perchance this shall be an atonement for an unintended error.

from *Thoughts and Meditations*—by Kahlil Gibran





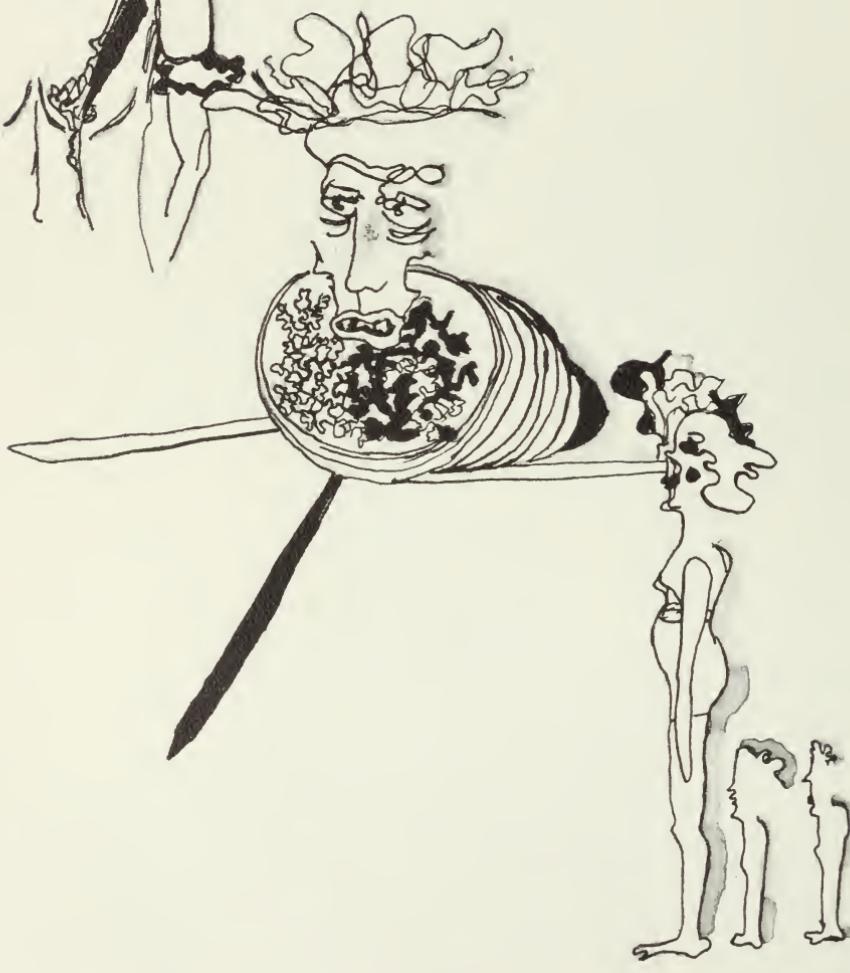
from *Of Music*

Flower of fragrance and bloom of feeling.

When the birds sing, do they call to the flowers in the fields, or are they speaking to the trees, or are they echoing the murmur of the brooks? For Man with his understanding cannot know what the bird is saying, nor what the brook is murmuring, nor what the waves whisper when they touch the beaches slowly and gently.

Man with his understanding cannot know what the rain is saying when it falls upon the leaves of the trees or when it taps at the window panes. He cannot know what the breeze is saying to the flowers in the fields.

from *Thoughts and Meditations* — by Kahlil Gibran



Cold milk
 with corn flakes that
 crunch and crackle until
 it
 creeps under the skin of sugar
 and soothes their sinews.

Teeth that tackle too
 tough meat
and make grinding noises
 that blows the mind of the drinker who drops the last dram
into his
 deep,
 dark, gullet,
looking guiltily towards
 a wife,
who was once a glamorous
 girl, but now lives in a girdle
looking good only with
 gook that is smeared on her face after she tells the
 children
 who hang across the banister
goodnite,
 begging
her to come back.

These brats are known as bad, to the teacher
unbuttoning her
 blouse in the dark
while bragging
 to herself how her bra has filled out
 she barges to seduce
 a man

known as sane to some
 but who sings
songs of sadness
 and sin
 to a soulful silence
 that suggests
good
 but glorifies
 in giving
 gory glory
to the unguarded.

Cher Lewis



“We were two on a bench,” the old man said to me.

“Brown on green wood,
And as I am a man, perhaps also
Green on brown wood.

We were brown. The hues of my face and of my being may be only brown.

And it is the brown of many colors.

Is it not so,” he asked the eternity beyond my head,
“That when glorious living color,
Individuals in their primary solitude are merged
The truce is transgressed;
They combine in independent array to produce only brown.

Of such were we.

My companion soon spoke to purge his ears
And he was unattended.

He spoke to my eyes.

‘I took a train ride once, and it hypnotized me to the fear:
To think at that train pace, that rhythmical
Steadying, monotonous pace,
It regulates your being. There are no emotions on a train.

And I saw a sunset behind the mountains
And its orange juice infiltrated the land,
Dampened the train.

And before the mountains, which were really not of the scene,
Was a plain. Flat and muddy. Brown.

The window was open and the air and the soot rushed in.
Softly forcing on me the love of their land.

The train bullied all sounds. I could not hear.

More than anything, I saw the smell; the earth, its life.

My senses echoed with it, yet I was not of it,
Locked inside an impartial train where I might not talk or hear;
And to talk and hear is to be one of the race.

No, I was to observe the people from my train.

The people were going home with their backs to me.

I could not see their homes.

They lay beyond the sunset.

And with each glance, I saw one soul engulfed while another was displayed.

And still the train won't stop.

The people were returning home, yet I was just passing through.

Must I live to just pass through?
Each time I stop and stay with the land,
The panic roots my limbs and I must run lest I be implanted.

I am afraid of letting them have me.

If you begin to love one, that one has trapped you.'

And he screamed through his loneliness,
'Then you are the possession!' "

The old man sighed with his hands

And blinked his code to me.

"He would not let me help, lest I rob him of his being,
Yet he could not help himself,
Or yield his need for man.

Then one day I gave him bread and when he could rip away his
thanks

He said I had delivered him to lift."

Dorothy Cheney





La Pluie

Pourquoi tombe la vilaine pluie
Quand la Nature aime le soleil?
Les fleurs et les autres merveilles
Pour être belles s'endorment la nuit.
Elles rêvent du jour jusqu'à minuit.
L'eau tombe des étoiles, les éveille.
Pourquoi tombe la vilaine pluie
Quand la Nature aime le soleil?
L'aurore avant qu' chaque pétale luit,
Que deviennent couleur de bouteilles
Feuilles de maints verts vifs, pas pareils
Le manque de sommeil les détruit.
Pourquoi tombe la vilaine pluie?

Anne M. Gares

Life At The Table Round

(The setting consists of a rectangular table, around which sit a score of people. Their number is undetermined, since periodically some are led away by a butler. These are immediately replaced, usually by twice the original number. A few people crawl under the table and are fed scraps by those sitting above them. At the head of the table sits a small, pacific man with cotton emerging from his ears. He is smiling, so we must presume that he is oblivious of the chaos around him. In the corner is a large glass display case in which a small insipid man is exhibited. Periodically, everyone at the table changes his seat. Much food is being thrown, and there are frequent cries of indignation or anguish. Confusion and chaos reign. Barnaby enters and is swept into a nearby seat.)

BARNABY: Good day, everyone. (Someone grunts and Barnaby is struck in the face with an egg. He begins to protest, but is silenced by a rotten tomato. Since everyone at the table seems to be similarly attired, he wipes his face and remains silent. The Fat Man next to him speaks.)

FAT MAN: (Groaning) Oh, Muse of Manna, descend to your humble and prostrate servant! Oh, for a nice, nasty, nourishing nip, or some slimy succulent sauerkraut! You don't happen to have a fork with you, do you? If so, give it to me, I implore you, for I am gradually perishing of malnutrition. (Tears) I haven't had a bite to eat for years, and I've been sitting here for an infinity! Every time I begin to take a bite, my fork turns into a noodle, and everything droops back onto the plate. Ah, woe! A veritable tragic Prometheus, chained to starvation!

BARNABY: You might eat with your hands.

FAT MAN: (Horrified) No! Completely against the rules.

BARNABY: But surely, if you're starving to death

FAT MAN: And break the rules? No, my little fossil. There are certain rules to which one abides, regardless of the circumstances. (He stares moodily at his food-filled plate, then hastens to add) Not that I'm one of those ridiculous little moralists, those failures whom everyone despises. Certainly not. In fact, every once in a while, I go so far

as to slip a little food onto my lap and then inconspicuously try to get it to my mouth. But usually the gong goes off and I get another star stamped on me.

BARNABY: That doesn't sound too terrible. At least you get fed.

FAT MAN: Ah, but the star, the star. Do you have any idea what that star signifies? No? It means (shudder) that I am no longer Accepted or Tolerated. They put me under the table where I must (you won't believe this) eat with my hands! Can you conceive of a more ignominious fate? Oh, murky destiny! Under the table eating ...

(Suddenly "Pop Goes The Weasel" begins to play and everybody scrambles for another seat. A butler enters and leads away four people. They are replaced by eight more. All the while, the man at the head of the table remains immobile and smiling. He is a tremendous contrast to the rest of the group. Barnaby moves three seats closer to the head of the table and finds himself sitting next to a professor reading a dictionary.)

PROFESSOR: My confused and ulcerous vocabulary
Suffers from unprecedented similarities.
The use of words appears inane.
Take the range of mountains in France and Spain;
They were Paranoids, declared my law,
Till someone called them Piranhas.
And now, oh great anomaly,
You begin to call them Pyrenees. (he sighs
profoundly)

And you, my boy, do you also find speech inadequate? My personal theory has always maintained that we should communicate by playing charades. Do you agree?

BARNABY: Why I'd never thought about it, but I manage to get along pretty well without it.

PROFESSOR: Ah, but the trouble with words, my friend, is that in reality they are all my words. I say them, so they should mean what I want them to mean when I say them. Why won't they do what I want them to? I'd wager that if I were to say "Profundity manifests

magnanimous or altruistic motives", you wouldn't be able to tell me what I meant.

BARNABY: (confused) What does it mean?

PROFESSOR: The cat sits on a mat. But how could you understand, you who distort my words? (He begins to cry. Barnaby is hit with an egg. This time it has been thrown by a small, shrewish man with a bulbous nose.)

ShMAN: I wonder if you could answer my question.

BARNABY: (More than a little peeved) I'll try.

ShMAN: In my last incarnation, circa 1234, I was a banana split, an .

BARNABY: Excuse me, but I don't believe they had banana splits then.

ShMAN: (Groaning) I know. That was a part of my problem; I never really existed. Now I am a man, but I expect to become an albino boar, oh, circa 2745. All Anno Domini, of course. And my question is: Am I regressing or advancing?

Banana, man, and finally boar.

Conqueror, lesser, and deplored? Who am I?

BARNABY: I don't really know if I can help you. The music will play any time now, and I have to move on. (He sidles away) I can't bother right now. I have problems of my own, you know. (The music begins, and, as before, everyone changes his seat. This time, however, two butlers enter and carry away the man at the head of the table. Barnaby moves down four seats.)

BARNABY: Where are they taking him?

JEALOUS VOICE: To the Main Dining Room.

BARNABY: Main Dining Room?

JEALOUS VOICE: It's what we're all trying to achieve: to get to the head of the table, and then out. I've been scrambling for that seat for years, but I never get there, and my term is almost up.

BARNABY: What about the people the butler led away? Where were they going?

JEALOUS VOICE: They didn't make it this time. Their term expired, but they'll have another crack at it before too long. Only trouble with the butler is that he always replaces them with too many people. Increases competition for the head of the table.

BARNABY: You mean I'm going to have to come back here?

JEALOUS VOICE: Until you make it out. My ninth time, but I'm getting closer.

BARNABY: (Sarcastically) Sounds amusing. Time consuming in any case. (He picks up an egg and is about to hurl it when he is interrupted by shouts of "Wilfred, Wilfred, Wilfred, Wilfred!" There are cheers, whistles, more food throwing, and occasionally tears. Someone faints and is revived by a tomato. Meanwhile, a man covered from head to toe with medals (and an occasional tomato) rises and beats the table. Instantly, all is silent.)

MEDALS: And now, a moment of respectful silence for Wilfred, our late lamented hero. (He points to the glass display case. All sigh.) Ah Wilfred, you live forever. Throbbing infinitely in our hearts, you are immortal. Every thud, thump, and attack reminds us of you. Inspire us! (Someone sighs with rapture) Ah, Wilfred. Who gave us this table?

ALL: Wilfred!

MEDALS: Who supplied the table cloth? The forks? The food?

ALL: (Approaching monomania) Wilfred! WilfredWilfredWilfred
WILFRED!

BARNABY: Who's Wilfred?

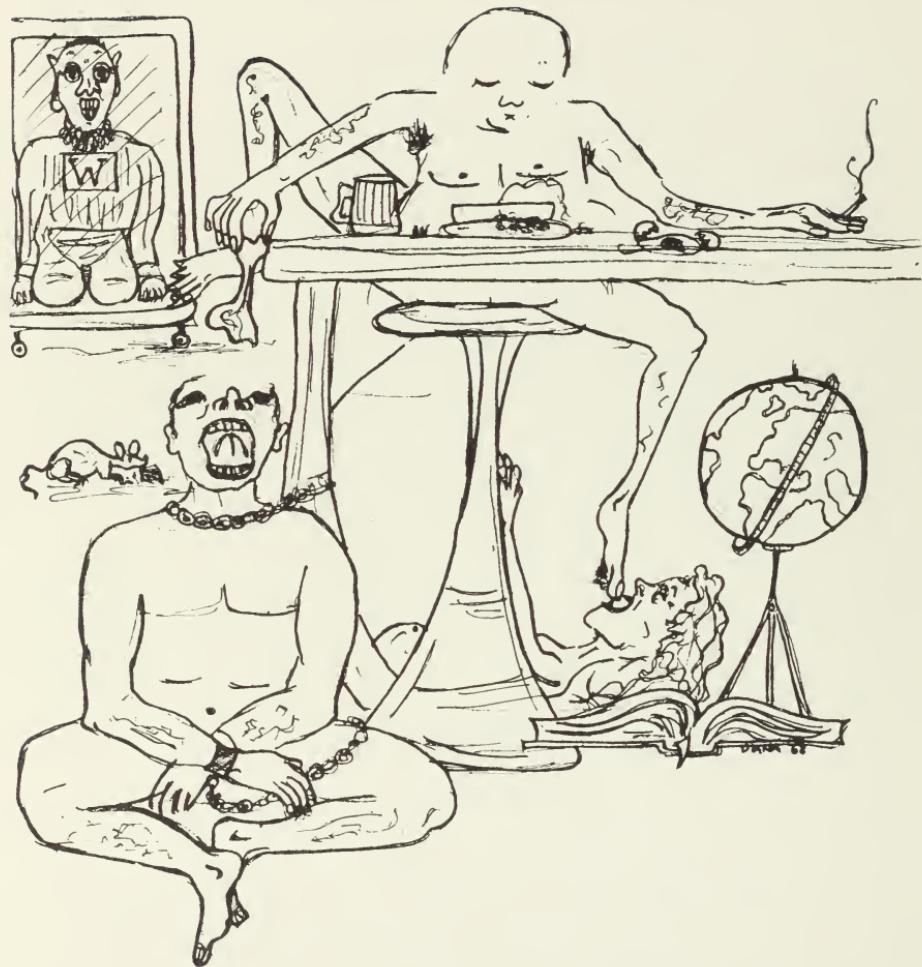
VOICE: He wants to know who Wilfred is! He dares to ask who Wilfred is!

ALL: Blasphemy, blasphemy, blasphemy! Put him under the table!

2nd VOICE: No! Save him! He can't be expected to know!

MEDALS: Is that the voice of a Dissenter? Aren't you a patriot, loyal to the Cause? What do we do with Wilfred haters, boys?

ALL: Revenge! Punish him! Inquisition! (A gong is heard, 2nd Voice is stamped and thrown under the table)



MEDALS: (Intimately to Barnaby) Now that justice has ridden the table of that reactionary, let me answer your question. That iconoclast never admitted that your question is perfectly justified. How can you be expected to know? All you have to do is read your fortune cookie, especially prepared, edited, and revised by the Wilfred Waiters (The Second Coming Is Our Calling).

BARNABY: (Reading his fortune cookie) "Wilfred, bless him, lived in an ancient decrepit castle in Mongolia. He was destitute, the scurvy rabble of common serfs having robbed him of his capital. For lack of furniture, and to satisfy a congenital Oedipus complex, he slept night after inglorious night in a termite-ridden mummy case. The tax collectors frequented the front door, and the unruly peasants, having no respect for royalty, stormed the back door, and all was not well in the world. One day, however, as he lolled about in his mummy case, he hit upon an ingenious discovery: if one mixes half a pint of cranberry juice with mummy case shavings and adds water, one produces a marvelously inebriating liquid. Slowly and insidiously, and only at night, he filled his moat with the potent substance, and before long the tax collectors were oblivious to both the front and back doors, and all the rabble had drowned. Unfortunately his luck was not to endure, however, for soon he received the chilling news that PROHIBITION was officially in effect. Of course, he was compelled to empty his moat of every thing and everybody and before long he was hanged in effigy by the rabble and brought into court by the tax collectors. In order to pay his debts, he was forced to take a job in a bakery where he was doomed to jumping out of cakes in a bikini at business men's luncheons for the rest of his days. When he died of a sprained ankle, the Wilfred Waiters (TSCIOC) had him stuffed by an excellent taxidermist and placed in the glass display case you see before you. REVISED 1956" Very interesting, but why is he a hero for . (Barnaby is interrupted by "Pop Goes The Weasel" as everyone dashes for the seat at the head of the table. When the music stops, Barnaby finds he has moved up a seat. The chair at the head of the table is still empty.)

A VOICE: Looking at these little jigs,

I feel boredom, or realm of pigs. (He is moved ahead one seat, as an increasing amount of food is being thrown. All sounds are blotted out by two arguing voices.)

1st VOICE: I don't care what you say, you narrow-minded sloth! We simply can't pull out and allow the aardvarks to overrun the country!

2nd VOICE: And no matter what you say, I'll still maintain that we shouldn't pull out and allow the aardvarks to gain control!

1st Voice: Oh, you most selfish of shellfish. Can't you give way to reason and pure logic? We can't afford to pull out, I say!

2nd Voice: Oh, ignorant icon! Don't you understand that those dirty little aardvarks will win if we pull out?

1st VOICE: I won't tolerate your prattle any longer! Once and for all, we should never pull out!

2nd VOICE: That's the last straw! If you won't admit the fact that we should not pull out, then I have nothing more to say to you! (each pulls out a pistol and shoots the other. Immediately their places are taken by four others. Suddenly Barnaby hears a cry of anguish. The man next to him has just lost at Monopoly.)

LOSER: Oh, universe, look upon the man who built
All his homes on railroads in a Monopoly game.
After all is invested, I realize with guilt
You can't build a home on a train.

I can't win at this game. My houses, everything is invested in the wrong place. I've even invested myself wrong! (The gong is heard. He is stamped and shoved under the table. Barnaby smiles.)

SOWER: I know how he feels. Sometimes I feel sort of useless myself. I grow plants, but they always rot in the fields.

BARNABY: Well, that has an obvious solution. Simply reap the crops.

SOWER: But that's not my job! And the reapers are on strike. So every year I grow those lovely plants, watch them grow, mature, and finally rot. Evil destiny.

BARNABY: (Hitting him with a rotten egg.) You are probably one of the stupidest characters at this table. You don't even have the sense to haul your plants in out of the rain! (The table groans; this is a terrible joke. "Pop Goes The Weasel" is played again, and Barnaby is forced to move down three seats. He is becoming quite impatient. Someone sneezes.)

BARNABY: God bless you. (He moves up one seat)

SNEEZER: Don't say that! Quick, take it back! You haven't yet defined yourself Which God? Which religion? You could be insulting me, you know, if I were a Greek Orthodox and you were thinking of a Hindu god. Fallacy! Fallacy! Blasphemous child.

BARNABY: It's merely an expression. I suppose it means a universal God of sorts.

SNEEZER: And then there's the possibility that I'm an atheist, in which case I might be insulted by the invocation. But thank you anyway. (Barnaby nods weakly. He is becoming increasingly frustrated. He turns to his neighbor, who is drinking vinegar.)

MAN: Bleachhch. How I hate vinegar. (He takes another mouthful.) Disgusting stuff, makes me sick. Blahh.

BARNABY: If you hate it so much, why do you drink it?

MAN: Very simple really. My toenails are waging war against my tastebuds. This week, I've allied myself with my toenails, and I'm trying to make my tastebuds suffer.

BARNABY: Really. (He steps forcefully onto the Man's toes. Instantly the music begins. There is a chaotic scramble for the still unoccupied chair at the head of the table. The chair is turned over in the confusion. Barnaby has moved down another seat. The Despot rises.)

DESPOT: Your eyes amused, you look with scorn,
When I say a cat's a unicorn.
Yet I speak the banal, simple Truth
I, innocent, blameless, purest youth.
For I, you see, may change the Truth
To whatever I may please to choose.
Truth is relative, arranged and flowered

To my qualifications, for I have power.
Might, as they say, is the only right,
And Truth is right when controlled by might. (Wild
applause)

BARNABY: How can he get away with saying that?

DESPOT: Simply because I have the power. Whoever controls, also controls standards, morals, and truth. What's a unicorn?

BARNABY: (Scornfully) Certainly not a cat. (He is hit by 452 eggs.) All right, all right. A unicorn's a cat. Satisfied?

DESPOT: Correct. And all who sit at this round table will agree....

BARNABY: Round?

DESPOT: Democratic euphemism, democratic euphemism. Truth is so revealing. (The listeners are becoming bored, and for lack of anything better to do, begin to throw food. Barnaby looks at the rotten tomato in his hand.)

A VOICE: My dog died of suffocation,
Doomed to inevitable annihilation.
Yet he was forgotten after the cremation.

BARNABY: (Frustrated and finally resolved.) It's an impossible dream.

Therefore: Rhyme

Is the slime
Of the refined. (He hurls his tomato at the speaker and laughs.)

Instantly a door opens and a butler enters to lead Barnaby away. As Barnaby rises to leave, there are shouts of "Better luck next term" and "Too bad, old boy." As Barnaby disappears, the music begins to play, and all fight their way to the seat at the head of the table.)

Dorothy Cheney





To Diet Foods

(Candy-flavored paste)

Cake-cement with air holes)

But bought to balance the cookies

Through rows of packaged mixes

For everything but H₂O

And on to the department

Of FROZEN FOODS-

the frolicking place

Of the MODERN (— o n + ~)

housewife

peas

In seven Varieties

BEANS

No less than seventeen

And onto pizza, chili, and tortillas

With FLAVOR from nowhere but the USA

And after the tour

Complementary coffee - to promote

A TIP for the grocery boy

(Nothing for **FREE**. Nothing.)

\$50.00 worth of "Purity" groceries

In **double strength**

Brown paper bags

To be prepared by thawing and cooking

With all the excitement and joy

Of making a bed.

Katherine Wies

SUPERMARKET SWEEP

A hundred cars

Perhaps no two exactly alike
But certainly not one totally different
From all the rest.

Red, Blue, & Yellow signs

Screaming, Demanding

That the customers notice

BARGAINS

GLINTING, GLEAMING METAL CARTS
WITH FEET

Patiently awaiting
Some unwary hand

Or child's foot

"Decor" - white floor, walls, & ceiling
Lighted with the WHITE STERILE LIGHT
Of an OPERATING ROOM

The stage is set - the tour begins

First

a i s l e

cookies

wr^{ap}

ed^{ck}

stacked

to TRAP! the hungry housewife
Around
corner

Coach of the Shabby

The old man next to me smells and in his hand he holds a folder that says, "Bus Ride to the Deep South". As he unfolds it and holds it so the paper falls white beneath nicotine stained forefinger and brownish cracked thumb nail, he grunts and bends intently over the pictures of rolling green lawns and people in front of large white houses, waving from plastic covered chaise lounges. He often looks up at the patent-leathered hair and wiry goatees of sticky, slick negro men in their shiny pants and leather jackets. The old man chortles to himself and I wonder why. I don't think there is anything amusing here. A little man with a plaid hat and shabby, b a g g y pants steps on my toe with black shoes, so scuffed and creased and cracked that the leather is peeling off in places, and he hands me a ticket that says, "Let's Talk". I give him 35 cents and my stomach feels hollow as I look at the finger positions on the card, and at his back, rounded, as he scuffs from person to person, each bored, with dead eyes and worn wrinkles. They are all so ugly and aged and pre-occupied with nothing and as I look out and away from the benches, outside at the slush and falling sleet, I wish that the door would open, bringing the usual gust of dampness that taps lightly on the back of your neck like dirty finger prints, and someone tall and straight and well-dressed and young and sheltered and bright-eyed would walk in. Then I would not be the only one looking at the old man's grey beard stubs or the creases puckering the mouth of the old lady across from me, whose false teeth do not fit properly or the skinny negroes, probably gay, leaning against the rows of s t e e l lockers; someone who can't dream of bus folders advertisements; someone who wants to wash his hands. Someone who can't bear the ugliness and commonness and grey world of slushy Sundays and the hiss of a closing door of a hot, airtight bus that leaves among the exhaust fumes of many more "coaches of the shabby".

Dyan Driscoll



He walked the bright fields with his love that day;
When the flowers and fruits of the earth peeked out,
And the leaves of the trees came alive.

He loved with his love in the jeweled fields that day
When the flowers and the fruits made the earth alive,
And the leaves of the trees greeted the sun.

He waited for his love in the golden field that day
When the flowers died and the fruits were picked
And the leaves of the trees plunged down.

He watched his love walk with another man in the frozen white fields
that day
When the flowers lay down near their mother,
And the leaves of the trees hid under the white with their great
masters watching from on high.

It is said that his love continued to walk the fields where he now lay;
While the flowers and fruits of the earth peeked out
And the leaves of the trees came alive.

Elizabeth Miller

Gypsy-gifted breeze
 tell why
in the crayon valley
 of poppies and musty green
some god with jagged tool—
 left such leaden grey
to cry against the child's
 bright coloring book—
and takes the life blood—
 scarlet as the poppies
and leaves a bent man
when sundown leaves an errant ghost—
to haunt the stomachs
 and hollow eyes—
of his children—
who know not to color a gull grey.

Dyan Driscoll





She had had pink plaid diapers,
Educational toys attached to her crib,
And the limited use of a pacifier.
The nursery school from nine to twelve,
Swings and walks and graham cracker crumbs,
Four kids in the car pool on the way home.
Sunday school in the new church basement,
"Jesus loves me this I know," but why
Does Mommy take me there in her new bathrobe?
Ballet lessons at the age of six,
For the grace and poise that children need
And to ruin their feet for life.
Piano lessons for a year or two,
The harmony of television westerns,
And first grade C-major piano pieces.
Junior high school in the bright new buildings,
pre-teen clothes and first cigarettes
And dreams of the glory of high school.
High school's first shocks - a new awareness
Of war, and bigots, and unfair judgments
Of kids whose fathers work on assembly lines.
The first few subtleties of difference
Between her parents' ideals and her own
- Which they tried to keep at a minimum.
And they won in their choice of her college.
(They were paying, they said)
And she changed, and with her, her unchanging home.
But not enough to separate them.
And she married the boy next door,
And she lived forty turnpike miles away
And brought up three kids of her own.

Katherine Wies





Do you feel that this is all a dream?
a carefully plotted
dream?

Reality with god things added?
a bird call dream,
and on with Rousseau,
two silver batteries,
with rusted tops
together with a rusted rod,
and one stands alone, in a bare,
gray pinwheel dream,
a bark in the distance,
and only you,
a laugh like a laugh,
thud, and neighbors and the weeping birch
a last caw, caw, caw,
sterilized humanity,
and time to return to my dream
in concrete beat.

Three forks and all too slender,
through green haze,
and rotted white wood,
quite finite is,
this dream,
this dream.

Cher Lewis



